REALITY SHOWS VIEWERSHIP: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GRATIFICATION AMONG YOUTH IN BENGALURU

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ABSTRACT

Television has been the integral part of our daily lives. Though television was introduced in India for educational purpose, it has evolved with the time. The advent of cable television and liberalisation policy of government has provided the audience plethora choice of channels. With the growing competition the television programme makers have always introduced new genres of programmes to retain the interest of audiences. One of the emerging trends in television has been the reality shows. The present study aims to understand what gratification youth obtain from reality shows. The paper adapts an exploratory method of study to gain a broader perspective. The study is anchored on Uses and gratification Theory. This study is conducted to identify the factors that have led people to watch reality television.

Keywords: Reality Shows, Television, Media, Gratification, TV Programs

INTRODUCTION

Television is one of the major mediums of entertainment in the present world. Television in India is a very well established industry which has thousands of programmes in many languages. These days most of the Indian households own a television in both rural and urban areas. The Small screen programming in India started in the early 1980s .In those days Doordarshan was only player in Indian Television market. The broadcast industry was liberalized, through LPG Policy in India which paved the way for the entry of cable television. The Early 1990's India saw the entry of many foreign players like Rupert Murdoch's Star TV Network in 1991, MTV, and others. In South India Sun TV (India) was launched in 1992 as the first private channel. As the industry grew the competition between the channels created a dire need to find something new led to creation of the concept of reality shows.

What is a Reality Show?

The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Communication Research Methods defines 'Reality television as a genre of programming that purports to show the unscripted actions of everyday people, rather than prepared dialogue delivered by actors.'

The reality television term is popularly used from 1990's but unscripted shows featuring people in real situations are as old as medium itself. The foundation of modern reality show could be drawn from Allen Funt's Candid Camera show where people were confronted with funny, unusual situations and filmed with hidden cameras in 1940's. The genre gained popularity in early 2000's across the globe.

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Reality Shows in India

The Indian reality shows are majorly adaptions of western shows with the twist of Indianisation. The reality shows on Indian television are majorly talent hunt shows. The Saga of Indian reality shows started with the advent of shows like *'Antakshari* in 1993 and Sa Re Ga Ma Pa. The first dancing reality show Boogie Woggie was aired in 1997 .The new genre attracted the audience as it gave break from the monotonous melodramatic Soaps. . In 2000's the reality shows saw a boom in India with the success of *'Kaun Banega Crorepati'* on Sony TV which was an adaption of *'Who wants to be a millionaire'.* The television program producers ventured into different subjects of reality shows like SITCOMS (e.g Comedy nights with Kapil on Sony TV) stunts and adventurous (e.*g Roadies on MTV*) and concepts based on matrimonial (e.g. *Rakhi ki Swayamvar*), suspicion (*e.g Emotional Atyachar on Bindass).* The breakthrough for reality shows is *"Bigg Boss"* which is again an adaption on british show Big Brother. With the growing popularity and competition the regional channels also started airing the reality shows.

Current Status of Television in India

Indian media is no longer the small organization it has acquired the status of the Industry today. Till today the television remains as the largest segment in the media and entertainment sector in India and is expected to maintain its strong growth momentum led by connected TVs which could cross 40 million homes and free television could cross 50 million homes 2025., The Television sector in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7% to reach a market of Rs INR847 billion by 2023. (FICCI-KPMG Report 2021).There is a significant scope for growth of Television sector at scaling greater heights in the country in future years.
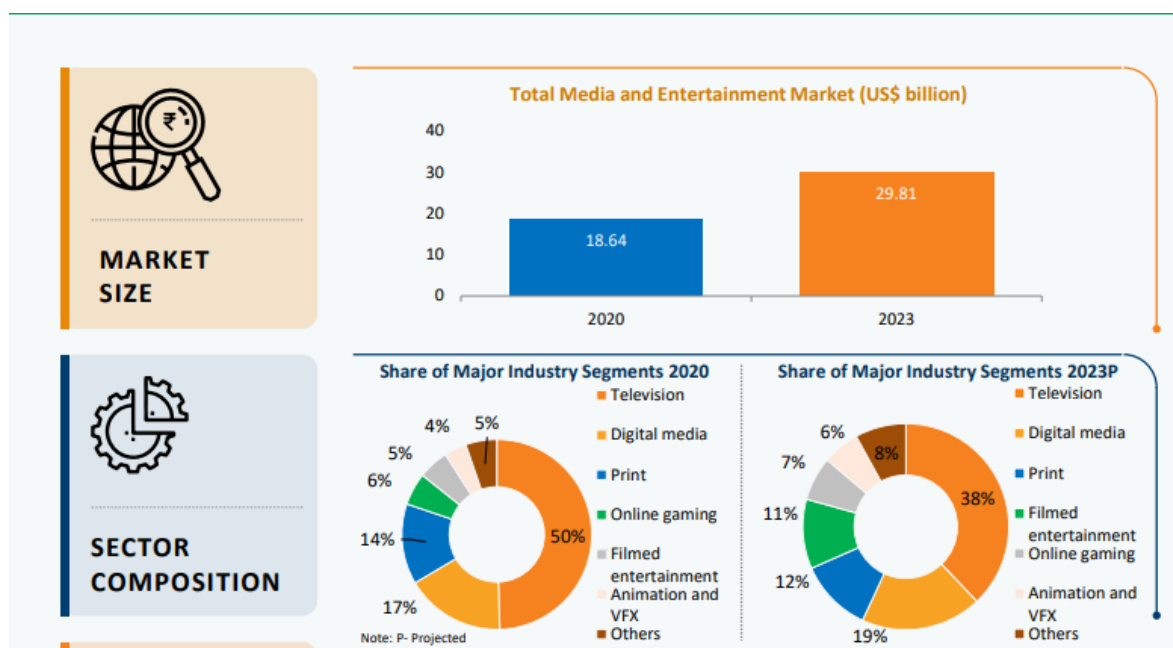

Figure 1: Representation of share of Indian media Industry Segments
(Source IBEF report 2021)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mathew Lombard, Mahadee. T. Ali, Min-Ju Ching, Mathew Dissinger, Amanda Scheiner, and Kendra Todd (2003) in their study "Understanding the genre and viewer Motivation and effects" Reality Television explains that the audience watch reality television for a significant

motivation for to see something unexpected, unscripted, and "natural", rather than to feel superior or to identify with the program participants.

Samuel Ebersole and Robert Woods (2007) in their research paper titled 'Motivations for Viewing Reality Television: A Uses and Gratifications Analysis' examine motives for viewing Reality TV programs. Employing a uses and gratifications approach, this study found five factors that explain program choice preference: personal identification with real characters, entertainment, mood change, pass time, and vicarious participation. The study found that interactive nature of Reality TV programming may contribute to the strong sense of personal identification that many viewers experience.

Kristin M. Barton (2009) in his research "Reality Television Programming and Diverging Gratifications: The Influence of Content" tries to understand how competition-based reality shows with different thematic content influence gratifications obtained by viewers. The research identified new gratification of personal utility among participants.

Heather M. Yuille. (2012) in his study"The Uses and Gratifications of Dance Reality Television Shows" explains that frequent, moderate and infrequent viewers do watch for different reasons, there are sub-level audiences within the overall dance reality show viewing audience and that watching dance reality shows doesn't seem to signify an increased interest in dance.

Zizi Paparschi and Andrew L Medison (2007) in their paper 'An Exploratory study of reality appeal: Uses and Gratifications of Reality TV' explain that those who enjoy reality tv for entertainment and relaxation also tend to perceive meticulously edited and frequently preplanned content as realistic. Those who have low social interaction watch television for voyeurism and companionship needs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is anchored on The Uses and gratifications theory (UGT). Uses and gratification theory is popular approach in understanding Mass Media. The fore founders of this theory are Elihu Katz, Blummer, Gruevitch .The Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is an audience centred approach. It emphasises on what people do with media rather than what media does to them. This theory considers audience as active participants in integrating media into their own life not just passive Consumers. . This theory holds audience responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. The Uses and Gratification Theory is a major breakthrough in mass communication studies because it was the first theory to suggest that the audiences are not passive users but active users of mass media. The approach suggests that people use media to fulfill specific gratifications.

McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) proposed a model of "media-person interactions" to classify four important media gratifications:

Personal relationships: The companionship and social utility from media,
Diversion: The escape from daily routine,
Surveillance: The forms of information seeking,
Personal Identity: The self-relevance or value reinforces that audience get from media.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In the present times, the lives of youth everywhere are shaped by a variety of texts and incessant media exposure .Reality shows are new emerging trend on the Indian Television

and are streamed in most of the Channels. The options are endless for media consumption among youth. In this context it becomes important for us to understand how they use and interact with reality shows.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study would be:

1. To find out the reach and access of reality show among youth.

2. To understand the gratifications obtained through reality television.

METHODOLOGY

This study incorporates an exploratory method of study. This method enables the researcher to understand the reach and access of reality television. This also enables the researcher to understand the gratification youth obtain through the reality show. A survey was conducted and a structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents across the Bangalore city.

Sample: According to National Youth Policy 2014 the people between the age group 15-29 are considered as youth. Hence the same age group respondents are selected for the study.

Locale: Bengaluru city has a heterogeneous population and the study would yield different response. It is home for people from different language and cultures. The study would yield different responses .Hence Bengaluru was chosen as locale of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The simple statistics are used to interpret data. The data is represented through table and chart

Table 1. Representation of Gender

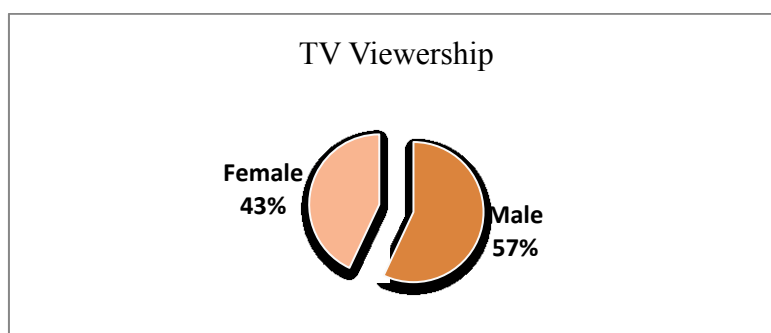| Gender	Responses	Percent
Male	57	57
Female	43	43
Total		
	100	100.0

Figure 2: Representation of Gender

The survey was conducted with a total of 100 samples. The data related media usage showed that 100% of the respondent poses a TV set with a cable/DTH connection and the data

showed the 57% of the respondents were males and 43% of the respondents were Females. Majority of the respondents were found to spend more than an hour in a day on watching Television, The respondents watch reality shows in many languages. Kannada, Hindi channels have highest viewers.

Table 2. Diversion Gratification

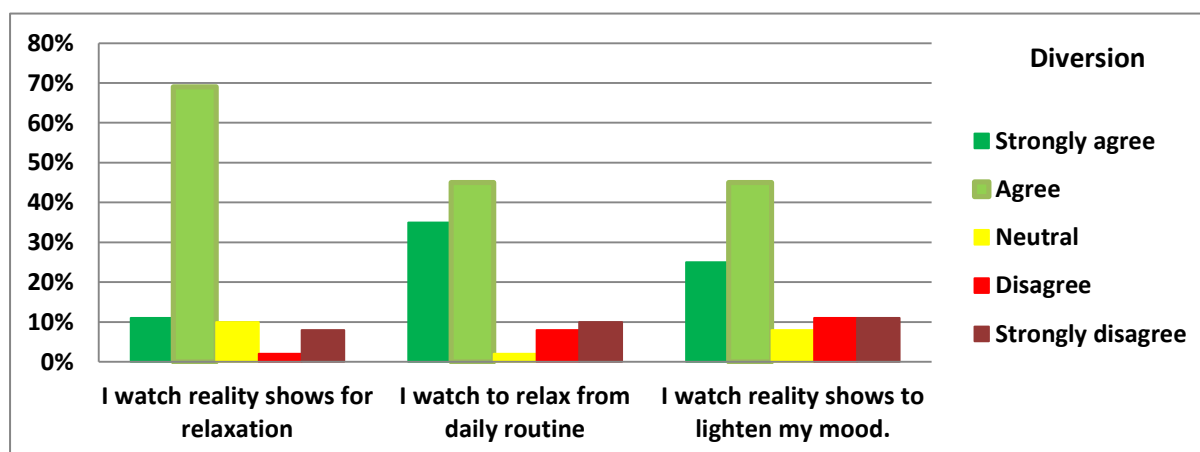| S No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I watch reality shows for relaxation.	11%	69%	10%	2%	8%
2.	I watch to relax from daily routine.	35%	45%	2%	8%	10%
3.	I watch reality shows to lighten my mood.	25%	45%	8%	11%	11%

Figure 3. Diversion Gratification

With the above three statements data it could be inferred the majority of respondents watch reality shows for relaxation and lighten their mood. The data can be interpreted as Diversion purpose. The data also shows the respondents obtain relaxation form the reality shows.

Table 3. Personal relations Gratification

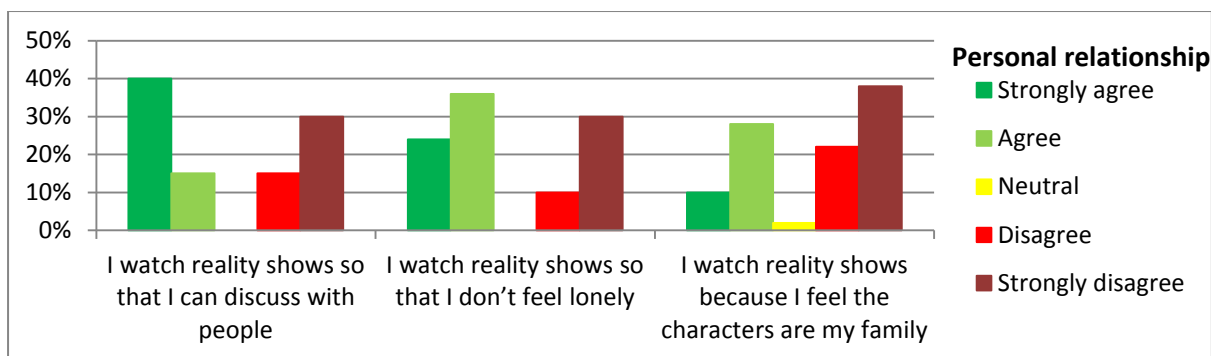| S. No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I watch reality shows so that I can discuss with friends.	40%	15%	0%	15%	30%
2.	I watch reality shows so that I don't feel lonely.	24%	36%	0%	10%	30%
3.	I watch reality shows because I feel the characters are my family.	10%	28%	02%	22%	38%

Figure 4. Personal relations Gratification

The data shows that majority of respondents' watch the reality shows so that they can discuss the same and be part of social group. This received a varied response from the respondents It was also found that the respondents have mixed opinions. It was observed that few respondents watch reality shows for companionship .It was also found half of people didn't watch reality show for this gratification.

Table 3: Surveillance Gratification

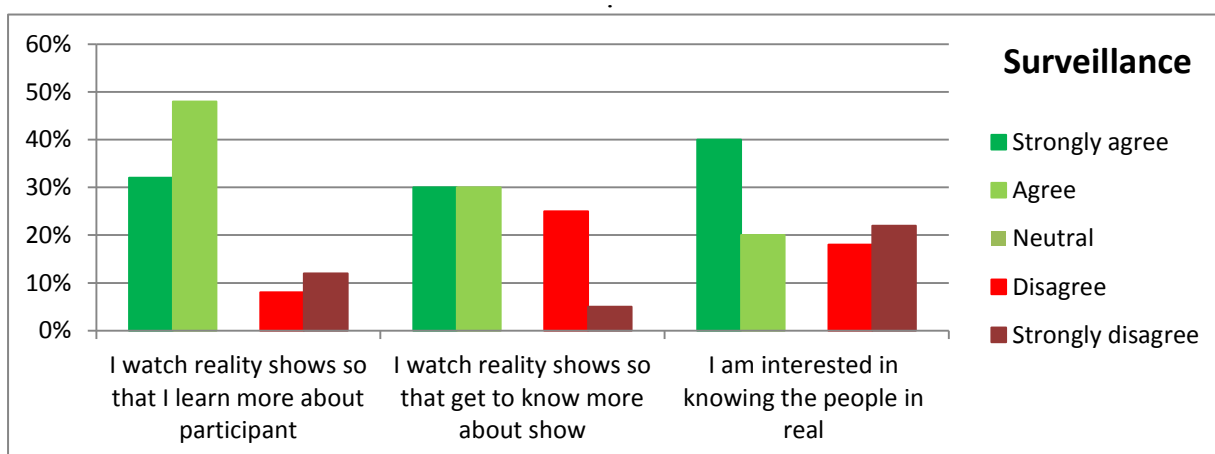| S. No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I watch reality shows so that I learn more about participant.	32%	48%	0%	8%	12%
2.	I watch reality shows so that get to know more about show.	30%	30%	0%	25%	5%
3.	I am interested in knowing the people in real.	40%	20%	0%	18%	22%

Figure 5. Surveillance Gratification

The data showed that the majority of respondents watch reality shows to gather more information about the show or participants. The respondent's curiosity to know more about the participants or the show is one of the reasons to watch reality shows. The surveillance gratification was obtained through the reality shows.

Table 5. Personal Identity Gratification

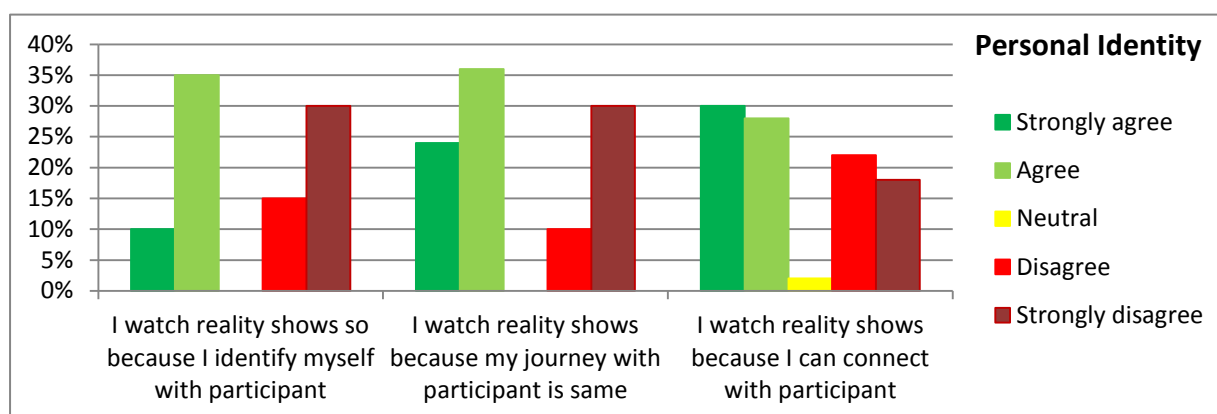| S. No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I watch reality shows so because I identify myself with participant.	10%	35%	0%	15%	30%
2.	I watch reality shows because my journey with participant is same.	24%	36%	0%	10%	30%
3.	I watch reality shows because I can connect with participant.	30%	28%	02%	22%	18%

Figure 6. Personal Identity Gratification

The analysis of statements related to personal identity gratification that there is mixed response Around 60% of respondents agreed that they obtain a gratification of personal identity from reality shows .But rest of the respondents said they don't get this gratification from reality shows.

FINDINGS

1. The usage of Television among young urban youth seemed to be interesting .As every respondent of this study used it for more than three hour on a daily basi**s.**

2. Reality shows are popular among the youth. The 100 respondents are well aware of the reality shows.

3. The majority of respondents watched reality shows as a diversion from daily routine. Reality shows are watched to entertainment.

4. The few respondents watch reality shows as they find it as reason to interact and integrate with friends and family.

5. The respondents also watched these shows also because they provided a window into the participant's life and journey. The respondent's curiosity to know more about the participants or the show is one of the reasons to watch reality shows.

6. Few respondents watch reality shows as they identify themselves with the participant or participant's journey.

Limitations – The study is limited only to the Bangalore respondents. Although the census indicated a large number of respondents in Bangalore south itself, due to the constraint of resources and time, the study was limited to 100 respondents. Hence the study cannot be generalized. In addition, this is an expost facto research which provides only percentages.

Hence there is further scope for the research to be conducted in other areas as well as with a large sample and statistical influences.

CONCLUSION

The reality shows are very popular among youth. Though the most of Indian reality shows are an adaptation of western shows, the perfect interwoven Indianisied strategy has worked wonders for many producers. The unscripted and shot in real situation is an USP of reality shows to attract the young viewers. It was observed that all the respondents watched one or the other reality show. Young viewers are drawn towards these shows because they depict characters and situations that are relevant to their everyday lives. The Reality TV brought the experience of interactivity in Indian TV with the involvement of audience and voting. The most of youngsters have strong affiliation with the reality shows. They even show interest to be part of the reality shows

The focus of this research was to understand if the audience received any gratification from reality show. The survey revealed that youth watch reality shows for a variety of reasons, entertainment and as a diversion from routine being one of the important reasons. The findings showed that there is significant evidence of gratification obtained through these programs though the gratifications among respondents vary.

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